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Manager Environmental Remediation

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Martha Williams, Director
Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Angie Grove, Chair
Montana State Parks & Recreation Board

1420 East Sixth Avenue
P.O. Box 200701
Helena, MT 59620-0701

RE: Somers Beach Project

Dear Martha and Angie,

BNSF is supportive of creating a new public access site on the Sliter property abutting the lake on the north shore of Flathead Lake. BNSF owns property adjacent to the Sliter property and have been working with a group of partners including Flathead Land Trust and the Sliter family for years to bring to life a vision of providing an additional point for the public to access the lake while preserving and protecting undeveloped property to benefit the public and wildlife alike. In fact, BNSF has pledged financial support and some adjacent property (through a long term lease) for use as a paved parking area to support this vision. The BNSF property could be included in the future access site in a manner similar to how BNSF has worked with the City of Whitefish for use of BNSF-owned property to be used as a public bike path and walking trail. To facilitate the Whitefish public access project BNSF has a 25-year agreement that commits the BNSF property to be used as a public access site. BNSF has also committed to contribute up to \$50,000 to facilitate the development of the site for public access consistent with the prior proposals shared between BNSF and the Sliters, which prevent recreational use of BNSF property, including its lakefront and the area known as the "swamp pond", where BNSF has environmental remedies in place.

We are excited at the prospect of being part of creating a much desired and needed public access on the north shore of Flathead Lake. This project has amazing potential to increase outdoor recreation opportunities on a beautiful jewel in the Flathead Valley for future generations to come while preserving the open space that is critical to support wildlife in the area and protecting the environmental work that BNSF has accomplished on its adjacent properties. We hope Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks and the Montana State Parks and Recreation Board can help facilitate this incredible project.

Sincerely,


Mark Engdahl
Manager Environmental Remediation